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POMI Officers Link Medical and Line Communities

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(ONE COMMENT)



Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Adm. Mike Mullen shakes hands with Lt. Raul Cardenal, Navy Bureau of Medicine and Surgery branch head for knowledge management, M3/M5, contingency support.

Lt. Raul Cardenal is the Navy Bureau of Medicine and Surgery branch head for knowledge management, M3/M5, contingency support.

The plans, operations, medical intelligence (POMI) community is a highly specialized cadre of Medical Service Corps officers that serve as operational liaisons between the medical and line communities. They are equally versed with strategic doctrine and operational processes as with public health practice and medical capabilities. Unlike the command surgeon, who provides clinical expertise, the POMI provides a medical

link between the administrative, operations, plans, and logistics sections of a commander's staff. This interaction provides the POMI with a unique skill set that commanders rely upon to build and maintain effective health services support networks and operations, particularly when working in a multiservice environment.

On Plans:

POMIs are embedded in command staffs throughout the spectrum of military commands and activities and must comfortably operate on the strategic, operational, and tactical levels of war. One of the proudest moments in my career occurred when I was working on a two-star Marine Corps staff. After a few months of attending staff meetings and planning sessions the general suddenly asked me to sit at the table of primary planners to provide an assessment and contribute to the discussion. He later told me that I had become an integral member of his Marine planning staff and in his eyes, I went from being a medical representative with planning skills to being an operational military planner who happens to come with medical expertise. The planner is intimately familiar with formal planning mechanisms such as the joint operational planning process and Marine Corps planning process, but must also be flexible enough to execute operational crisis on the back of a napkin.

On Operations:

While working on disaster relief operations in the Philippines in 2008, a flight surgeon friend

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told me “I didn’t really understand what it is you do, until I saw you in action. I now have a tremendous respect for your profession because of the wide variety of complex issues you have to be on top of simultaneously.” His comment surprised me because it had never occurred to me how ‘behind the scenes’ my job was.

A successful operations officer is one who makes things happen so smoothly that those executing the mission take no notice. In the field, the primary responsibility of the POMI is to facilitate everything from administration and logistics to security and public relations. This allows clinicians to maximize their time and efforts on delivering quality care.

On Medical Intelligence:

Perhaps the greatest support that the POMI can provide his command surgeon is by providing medical intelligence assessments based on a rigorous analysis of the operating environment. By utilizing a variety of public health and intelligence sources the POMI defines the operational environment and its effects on health service support operations, evaluates the operational environmental threats, and determines courses of action to meet actual and potential threats. The surgeon can then utilize this assessment to provide the commander with an evidence-based recommended course of action to address the threat.

The current national security strategy of the United States directs increased engagement with strategic global partners. The use of medical diplomacy in this capacity has proved to have a lasting and profound impact in theater security cooperation missions and foreign humanitarian assistance/disaster relief (HA/DR) responses. The greatest contribution the POMI community can make is to champion how medical capabilities can be best leveraged to accomplish this mission, and then simply make it happen.

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Aneesah Akbar-Uqdah

There is absolutely no doubt in my mind that I want to and am capable of doing exactly this. I am so excited to get into the field of Medical Intelligence as a Marine Corps officer. Currently I am employed with the CDC as public health advisor and looking forward to my commission in the Corps. this post was vey motivating and helpful to me and my career development.

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